

Filed for intro on 04/13/2000

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 620  
By Lewis

A RESOLUTION memorializing the United States Congress to  
reauthorize the Surface Mining Control and  
Reclamation Act (SMCRA).

WHEREAS, since the passage of the landmark Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act in 1977, over 5.4 billion dollars have been paid into the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund, but only 4.0 billion dollars have been appropriated collectively for both the Abandoned Mine Land (AML) program and Rural Abandoned Mine Program (RAMP). Less than one-half (1/2) of the funds collected for RAMP have been appropriated; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee ranks high in the number of unserviced applications for reclamation projects, and less than one-half (1/2) of the state's abandoned mine land scarred by past mining has been reclaimed; and

WHEREAS, a majority of the abandoned mined land in Tennessee remains on private properties; this situation adversely impacts local communities and their ability to improve the quality of life and economic growth in their respective areas; and

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WHEREAS, RAMP was designed to be landowner-driven and directed through local Conservation Districts, thus enabling individual landowners and small communities to obtain the necessary technical and financial resources to repair their land to a productive use; and

WHEREAS, only fifty percent (50%) of such areas have been reclaimed, and only two-thirds (2/3) of the funds collected for reclamation purposes have been appropriated; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That this General Assembly hereby memorializes the United States Congress to reauthorize the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) of 1977, as amended by the Abandoned Mine Act of 1990, through 2010, and to exclude the receipts and disbursements of the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund from the budget of the United States government to ensure that the funds collected annually therefor are utilized each year for the reclamation purposes for which such fund was established.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the United States Congress is urged and encouraged to annually appropriate the funds collected for the Rural Abandoned Mine Program (RAMP) directly to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an enrolled copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Speaker and the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives; the President and the Secretary of the U.S. Senate; and to each member of Tennessee's Congressional delegation.